

Henry Castro House
Castroville, Texas.

HABS No. Tex-385

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Texas-3

Historic American Buildings Survey
Bartlett Cooke, District Officer
615 Maverick Bldg., San Antonio, Texas.

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HENRY CASTRO HOUSE
Castroville, Medina County, Texas.

Present Owner: Henry Haas

Date of Erection: 1844

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Henry Castro

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One

Materials of Construction: Pure zinc 1/16" thick

Other Existing Records: Deed in Medina County Courthouse and the book
"Castro-ville and Henry Castro the Empresario."

Additional Data:

This house originally contained one room. It is called the Henry Castro house but in the beginning was used as a storeroom. It is built of pure zinc about 1/16" of an inch thick, which was brought from England, and bears the trade mark "Walkers Gospel Oak Works", Norwood and Rogers patent and was made in Tipton Stratsfordshire, England. The house is still in perfect condition and will be for many years to come.

Henry Castro was the organizer and founder of the colony, which was named Castro-ville, in his honor. Mr. Castro also founded D'Hanis, and Quihi. Castro, according to all accounts a glorified real estate agent, was called "Empresario"; his troubles were many and his financial gain was very small. In 1827 he was Consul for the Kingdom of Naples, in Providence, R.I. Mr. Castro came to Texas in 1842 and from that journey evolved the colonization project, which occupied and embittered the remaining years of his life.

Mr. Castro was still in the village at the beginning of the Civil War, but had become so disillusioned that he set out for Mexico with the intention of returning to France; he died in Monterrey, Mexico May 1864. His last will was dated May 1, 1864, and read as follows:

"I the undersigned Henry Castro, native of Bayonne in France, resident and domiciled in the city of Monterrey, state of Nuevo Leon,

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Mexico, enjoying all of mental faculties and wishing to dispose of my possessions as I see fit, I express in this testament my last wishes. I desire that after my death, my estate, money are possessions pass to Lorenzo Castro, now at Monterrey, who I constitute my heir universal and absolute. Wishing that all which I possess, here, in Texas, in France or elsewhere, return to him after my death, that he take possession of them and enjoy them as his own.

In constituting Lorenzo Castro my universal heir, as I have just said, I constitute him also the head of the family, for the protection of Madam Castro, my wife, and Angelo Causici. I ask of him only the continuation of his noble conduct towards them that the earth may rest lightly on me.

"Such are my last wishes, and I desire that they be respected.

"Done at Monterrey, State of Nuevo Leon, Mexico, 1st day of the month of May 1864. I have signed this document. Henry Castro.

"The seal on the envelope of this will bears the arms of my family. I descend in line direct Jean de Castro, Vice Roy of the Portuguese Indies and Goa."

Madam Castro stayed in the village of Castroville living mainly at the excellent hotel of M. Parde, a poor forlorn old lady with wandering wits. She died February 28, 1871, in San Antonio, Texas and was buried from the Church of St. Louis in Castroville. Her son Lorenzo died on May Day 1888, two years after his wife Augustine; so ended the Castro family in Texas.

Before the railroad was built in the '80's Castroville was by far the largest city in Medina County, having a population of seven hundred, against Hondo's three hundred, D'Hanis's three hundred, Devine's three hundred, Quihi's two hundred, New Fountain's two hundred; the assessed value of all property in Medina of January 1, 1891 was two million seven hundred and sixty three thousand nine hundred and eighty-eight dollars.

This information was secured from the book "Castro-Ville and Henry Castro Empresario" by Julia Nott Waugh. The Anvil Newspaper January 1, 1892.

Author: Homer H. Lansberry
Homer H. Lansberry

APPROVED: _____

Bartlett Cocke
Bartlett Cocke, District Officer.

Date: December 8, 1936

3/12/37 THW